

~~TOP SECRET~~

COUNTER INTELLIGENCE GROUPS
(4300th CIC Detachment)
CITY OF VIENNA
APO 779 US ARMY

#1751

12 July 1946

SUBJECT: Rat Line from Austria to South America.

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION

1. In accordance with instructions from the Office of the Director of Intelligence, USIA, these agents have attempted to establish a safe means of resettlement of dependents of visitors and VIP personalities.

2. Through the Vatican connections of Father Dragonovic, Croat, EP Resettlement Chief of the Vatican circle, a tentative agreement was reached to assist in this operation. The agreement consists of simply mutual assistance, i.e., these agents assist persons of interest to Father Dragonovic to leave Germany and, in turn, Father Dragonovic will assist these agents in obtaining the necessary visas to Argentina, South America, for persons of interest to this Command.

3. It may be stated that some of the persons of interest to Father Dragonovic may be of interest to the Denazification policy of the Allies; however, the persons assisted by Father Dragonovic are also of interest to our Russian ally. Therefore, this operation cannot receive any official approval and must be handled with minimum amount of delay and with a minimum amount of general knowledge.

4. On 3 July 1946, these agents contacted the Austrian representative of Father Dragonovic in Salzburg, as prearranged. Through the assistance of CIC Salzburg, transportation was obtained and the representative was escorted to Bad Reichenhall, Germany, where he was to meet the German representative of Father Dragonovic's organization. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, the German representative did not appear. The Austrian representative was escorted back to Salzburg to await developments.

5. On 7 July 46 these agents received a telegram from the U.S. contact in Rome (Fred Martin) that the German representative was arrested while crossing the German/Austrian border on or about 1 July 46. It was the desire of these agents to go to Bad Reichenhall, Germany, to make the necessary investigation, however due to transportation difficulties this was not deemed advisable.

6. The status of subject rat line is not stable at this time; however, it is felt that with CIC connections in Germany, these agents can assist the German representative and continue their progress as outlined above.

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#1751

NOTE: It is suggested to the Chief, 450th CIC Detachment, USFA, that a reassignment of jeeps be made, and that two detachment jeeps be assigned to headquarters. These jeeps could be stationed and utilized by Land Salzburg and Land Upper Austria but be prepared to move upon call from representatives of CIC headquarters. In this manner most of the difficulties in obtaining transportations for such operations can be avoided. Also the responsibilities for incorrect use of said vehicles, i.e., police violations, utilizing Government vehicles for pleasure, will be the responsibility of the driver and not the Land Section to which the jeep is originally assigned.

It is believed that in this manner considerable time, personal difficulties, and personality differences could be avoided and assist in the speedy completion of similar missions.

Paul E. Lyon
PAUL E. LYON
S/A, CIC

Charles Crawford
CHARLES CRAWFORD
S/A, CIC

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ON 21 JUL 1981
BY 00701 JSC/STP/STP
AUTHORITY: E.O. 11652, 11653, 11654

~~TOP SECRET~~

79

COUNTER INTELLIGENCE CORPS
(430th CIC Detachment)
CITY OF VIENNA
APO 777 US ARMY

12 July 1948

SUBJECT: Rat Line from Austria to South America.

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION

1. In accordance with instructions from the Office of the Director of Intelligence, USFA, these agents have attempted to establish a safe means of resettlement of dependents of visitors and VIP personalities.
2. Through the Vatican connections of Father Draganovic, Croat, DP Resettlement Chief of the Vatican circle, a tentative agreement was reached to assist in this operation. The agreement consists of simply mutual assistance, i.e., these agents assist persons of interest to Father Draganovic to leave Germany and, in turn, Father Draganovic will assist these agents in obtaining the necessary visas to Argentina, South America, for persons of interest to this Command.
3. It may be stated that some of the persons of interest to Father Draganovic may be of interest to the Denazification policy of the Allies; however, the persons assisted by Father Draganovic are also of interest to our Russian ally. Therefore, this operation cannot receive any official approval and must be handled with minimum amount of delay and with a minimum amount of general knowledge.
4. On 3 July 1948, these agents contacted the Austrian representative of Father Draganovic in Salzburg, as prearranged. Through the assistance of CIC Salzburg, transportation was obtained and the representative was escorted to Bad Reichenhall, Germany, where he was to meet the German representative of Father Draganovic's organization. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, the German representative did not appear. The Austrian representative was escorted back to Salzburg to await developments.
5. On 4 July 48 these agents received a telegram from the U.S. contact in Rome (Fred Martin) that the German representative was arrested while crossing the German/Austrian border on or about 1 July 48. It was the desire of the agents to go to Bad Reichenhall, Germany to make the necessary investigation, however due to transportation difficulties, this was not deemed advisable.
6. The status of subject rat line is not settled at this time, however it is felt that with CIC connections in

Germany, these agents can assist the German representative and continue their progress as outlined above.

NOTE: It is suggested to the Chief, 430th CIC Detachment, USFA, that a reassignment of jeeps be made, and that two detachment jeeps be assigned to headquarters. These jeeps could be stationed and utilized by Land Salzburg and Land Upper Austria but be prepared to move upon call from representatives of CIC headquarters. In this manner most of the difficulties in obtaining transportations for such operations can be avoided. Also the responsibilities for incorrect use of said vehicles, i.e., police violations, utilizing Government vehicles for pleasure, will be the responsibility of the driver and not the Land Section to which the jeep is originally assigned.

It is believed that in this manner considerable time, personal difficulties, and personality differences could be avoided and assist in the speedy completion of similar missions.

[signed]
PAUL E. LYON
S/A, CIC

[signed]
CHARLES CRAWFORD
S/A, CIC

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Informal Routing Slip

Hq Operations

1139

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HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES FORCES IN AUSTRIA

#1751
198-14

SUBJECT: History of the Italian Rat Line

Number each message consecutively. Fill in all columns, authenticate message, draw a line across the page just below authentication. Use entire width of page. Use only for inter-office communications.

NO.	FROM:	TO	DATE	MESSAGE
1	Br 430th CIC Opns	D/G-2 ATTN: Maj Milano	10 Apr 50	<p>1. <u>ORIGINS.</u></p> <p>a. During the summer of 1947 the undersigned received instructions from G-2, USFA, through Chief CIC, to establish a means of disposition for visitors who had been in the custody of the 430th CIC and completely processed in accordance with current directives and requirements, and whose continued residence in Austria constituted a security threat as well as a source of possible embarrassment to the Commanding General of USFA, since the Soviet Command had become aware of their presence in US Zone of Austria and in some instances had requested the return of these persons to Soviet custody.</p> <p>proceeded to Rome where, through a mutual acquaintance, he conferred with a former Slovakian diplomat who in turn was able to recruit the services of a Croatian Roman Catholic Priest, Father Dragonovich. Father Dragonovich had by this time developed several clandestine evacuation channels to the various South American countries for various types of European refugees.</p> <p>2. <u>HISTORY OF OPERATIONS.</u></p> <p>a. During 1947 and 1948 it was necessary to escort the visitors physically from Austria to Rome from the standpoint of security and to avoid any embarrassment on the part of the US Government which could arise from faulty documentation or unforeseen border and police incidents.</p> <p>b. Documents to assist in the journey of these people from Austria to Rome were secured through S/A Crawford, Reference IRS, Subject: 'Debriefing of S/A Crawford', dated 6 April 1950.</p> <p>c. Upon arrival in Rome, the visitors were turned over to Dragonovich who placed them in safe haven houses being operated under his direct supervision. During this period, the undersigned then actively assisted Father Dragonovich with the help of a US citizen, who was Chief of the eligibility office of IRO in Rome, in securing additional documentation and IRO aid for further transportation. This, of course, was done illegally</p>

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ON 21 JUL 1983

BY CDR USAINSCOM F01PD

Auth Para 1-003 DoD 0200.1-R

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D/G-2 IS REG No. 333

COPY No. 1

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 Informal Routing Slip

HEADQUARTERS
 UNITED STATES FORCES IN AUSTRIA

(Ho Operations)
 1139
 #1751
 198-14

SUBJECT: History of the Italian Rat Line (Minute 1 Continued)

Number each message consecutively. Fill in all columns, authenticate message, draw a line across the page just below authentication. Use entire width of page. Use only for inter-office communication.

NO.	FROM	TO	DATE	MESSAGE
				<p>inasmuch as such persons could not possibly qualify for eligibility under the Geneva IRO Charter. However, after several months the American suddenly lost his mental stability through overindulgence in alcohol and disclosed some of the details of the arrangement to his superiors and other official agencies in Rome which required the undersigned to realign the operation and to discontinue contact with the IRO office. Thus, Father Dragonovich was forced to turn to other sources in the National Catholic Welfare Organization. He also secured permits for residence of these persons from the Italian police, permits to travel from Rome to Genoa or Naples, as the case might be, and permits from the Italian Foreign Office for various visas. In short, it can be stated that Dragonovich handled all phases of the operation after the defectees arrived in Rome, such as the procurement of IRO Italian and South American documents, visas, stamps, arrangements for disposition, land or sea, and notification of resettlement committees in foreign lands.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">d. As the operation continued, Dragonovich's possibilities for the necessary means, documentation, travel and permits expanded and it became possible to ship the visitors from Austria, thus eliminating personal escort by CIC agents to Rome. A new phase was thus established and an employee of Dragonovich proceeded to Austria, picked up the charges and took them to Genoa where they were placed in safe haven houses to await disposition to South America.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3. <u>DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED.</u></p> <p>The following difficulties and problems may be expected by those who may become engaged in rat line operations:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">a. Frequent changes in travel documents necessary for movement in European countries.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">b. Changes in the Italian border control and police supervision of DP's in Italy.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">c. Land and sea transportation facilities or lack thereof.</p>

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 ON 22 JUN 1983
 BY CDR USAINCOM FOIPO
 Auth Para 1-605 DoD 5200.1-R

478

Internal Routing Slip

FRANCHISING
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

SUBJECT: History of the Italian Rat Line (Omita) (Continued)

Number each message consecutively. Fill in all columns, authenticate message, draw a line across the page just below authentication. Use entire width of page. Use only for inter-office communication.

NO.	FROM	TO	DATE	MESSAGE
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				<p>d. Opening and closing of immigration quotas by the various countries of South America.</p>
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				<p>e. The physical condition of visitors and dependents. It may be stated here that it is desirable that all persons be examined for TB, syphilis or other contagious diseases and that the female dependents be cautioned during the evacuation period relative to pregnancy, inasmuch as pregnant women or small children are acceptable only with great difficulty and at great expense.</p>
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				<p>f. Marriage Status. In view of the fact that Dragonovich is a Roman Catholic priest and the National Catholic Welfare is involved, the marriage status of male and female must be clearly established, inasmuch as the personalities associated in this operation will not condone any acts contrary to the Church such as common law marriage, illegitimate children not baptized, etc.</p>
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				<p>g. Although it might be advantageous to have absolute "control" of Father Dragonovich and his means of evacuation, it may be categorically stated that it is not possible and in the opinion of the undersigned not entirely desirable. Dragonovich is known and recorded as a Fascist, war criminal, etc., and his contacts with South American diplomats of a similar class are not generally approved by US State Department officials, plus the fact that in the light of security, it is better that we may be able to state, if forced, that the turning over of a DP to a Welfare Organization falls in line with our democratic way of thinking and that we are not engaged in illegal disposition of war criminals, defectors and the like.</p>
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4. COMPROMISES.

				<p>a. As stated above, the US citizen, Chief of the Eligibility Office, Rome, was one [redacted] who was allegedly a member of OSS during World War II, and who fancied himself as a top intelligence operative in Italy. After his breakdown due to alcoholism, [redacted] imagined himself as the saviour of Italy in view of the danger of a Communist victory during the elections of 1948, thus told stories of how the</p>
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ON 21 JUL 1983
BY CDR USAFNSON POIPC
Auth Para 1-603 DoD 5800.1-R

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#1751
198-14

Informal Routing Slip

HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES FORCES IN AUSTRIA

SUBJECT: History of the Italian Rat Line (Minute 1 Continued)

Number each message consecutively. Fill in all columns, authenticate message, draw a line across the page just below authentication. Use entire width of page. Use only for inter-office communication.

NO.	FROM:	TO	DATE	MESSAGE
				<p>undersigned could assist in providing large numbers of underground troops, military supplies, sea evacuation, air evacuation and the like. This, of course, caused inquiries as to the exact nature of the work in which the undersigned was engaged. This was explained away successfully in a personal interview with Admiral Mentz, Chief of IRB, Italy, and a full report was submitted to G-2, USFA.</p>
				<p>b. The Brazil Expedition was, again, a compromise which was not the fault of operational technique. A female visitor who was inclined to be rather frivolous in her attentions became a public nuisance while under protective custody in Austria and was, therefore, evacuated as a married woman in custody of her smour of the moment. During the voyage, the lady in question changed her mind and upon arrival in Brazil sought assistance and protection from both the Brazilian authorities and the US Embassy. They, of course, were uninformed, inasmuch as it is impossible, due to lack of knowledge of transportation dates, visa quotas, etc., to give prior information as to when the shipments are to be made. The affair was made a matter of official investigation and necessarily other innocent people were involved and returned to Europe.</p>
				<p>5. <u>RECOMMENDATIONS.</u></p> <p>a. It has been the experience of this organization that only one man should be assigned the mission of disposition when dealing with Father Dragonovich. Inasmuch as he, although reliable from a security standpoint, is unscrupulous in his dealings concerning money, as he does a considerable amount of charity work for which he receives no compensation, it is not entirely impossible that he will delay one shipment for one organization to benefit another organization who pays higher prices.</p> <p>b. Due to the background of Father Dragonovich and the nature of his work, it is not believed practical that the MA's in foreign countries under diplomatic status should become involved with the DR's who land through his channels of this operation.</p> <p>c. Each visitor should be thoroughly and properly briefed and preparations for his movement be made in the light of his cover story. Each should be furnished sufficient clothing, some</p>

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BY CDR USA/INSCOM P01PO
Auth Para 1-803 Sec 0200.1-R

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Informal Routing Slip

#1751
198-14

HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES FORCES IN AUSTRIA

SUBJECT: History of the Italian Rat Line (Minute 1 Continued)

Number each message consecutively. Fill in all columns, authenticate message, draw a line across the page just below authentication. Use entire width of page. Use only for inter-office communications.

NO.	FROM	TO	DATE	MESSAGE
				<p>travel money, and advance notice be sent through Dragonovich channels to assist in his rehabilitation in the country where he lands.</p> <p>Dragonovich should be handled as a single operation by one agency and no attempt should be made to control him or his sources for reasons set forth in this memorandum.</p> <p>d. The facilitation of Father</p> <p>FOR THE COMMANDING OFFICER:</p> <p><i>Paul S. Lyon</i> PAUL S. LYON IB Operations Officer</p> <p>Tel: Salzburg 1146</p> <p>Copy No. 2 burned 14/4/50 - RW.</p>
				<p>REGRADED UNCLASSIFIED ON 21 JUL 1993 BY CDR USAF/SECDEF/IFO Auth Para 1-603 DoD 5200.1-R</p> <p>TOP SECRET</p>

Informal Routing Slip

HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES FORCES IN AUSTRIA

SUBJECT: History of the Italian Rat Line

No.: 1
FROM: Hq 430th CIC Opns
TO: D/G-2 ATTN: Maj Milano
DATE: 10 Apr 50

1. ORIGINS.

a. During the summer of 1947 the undersigned received instructions from G-2, USFA, through Chief CIC, to establish a means of disposition for visitors who had been in the custody of the 430th CIC and completely processed in accordance with current directives and requirements, and whose continued residence in Austria constituted a security threat as well as a source of possible embarrassment to the Commanding General of USFA, since the Soviet Command had become aware that their presence in US Zone of Austria and in some instances had requested the return of these persons to Soviet custody.

b. The undersigned, therefore, proceeded to Rome where, through a mutual acquaintance, he conferred with a former Slovakian diplomat who in turn was able to recruit the services of a Croation [sic] Roman Catholic Priest, Father Dragonovich [sic - here and below]. Father Dragonovich had by this time developed several clandestine evacuation channels to the various South American countries for various types of European refugees.

2. HISTORY OF OPERATIONS.

a. During 1947 and 1948 it was necessary to escort the visitors physically from Austria to Rome from the standpoint of security and to avoid any embarrassment on the part of the US Government which could arise from faulty documentation or unforeseen border and police incidents.

b. Documents to assist in the journey of these people from Austria to Rome were secured through S/A Crawford, Reference IRS, Subject: "Debriefing of S/A Crawford", dated 6 April 1950.

c. Upon arrival in Rome, the visitors were turned over to Dragonovich who placed them in safe haven houses then being

operated under his direct supervision. During this period, the undersigned then actively assisted Father Dragonovich with the help of a US citizen, who was Chief of the eligibility office of IRO in Rome, in securing additional documentation and IRO aid for further transportation. This, of course, was done illegally inasmuch as such persons could not possibly qualify for eligibility under the Geneva IRO Charter. However, after several months the American suddenly lost his mental stability through overindulgence in alcohol and disclosed some of the details of the arrangement to his superiors and other official agencies in Rome which required the undersigned to realign the operation and to discontinue contact with the IRO office. Thus, Father Dragonovich was forced to turn to other sources in the National Catholic Welfare Organization. He also secured permits for residence of these persons from the Italian police, permits to travel from Rome to Genoa or Naples, as the case might be, and permits from the Italian Foreign Office for various visas. In short, it can be stated that Dragonovich handled all phases of the operation after the defectees arrived in Rome, such as the procurement of IRO Italian and South American documents, visas, stamps, arrangements for disposition, land or sea, and notification of resettlement committees in foreign lands.

d. As the operation continued, Dragonovich's possibilities for the necessary means, documentation, travel and permits expanded and it became possible to ship the visitors from Austria, thus eliminating personal escort by CIC agents to Rome. A new phase was thus established and an employee of Dragonovich proceeded to Austria, picked up the charges and took them to Genoa where they were placed in safe haven houses to await disposition to South America.

3. DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED.

The following difficulties and problems may be expected by those who may become engaged in rat line operations:

a. Frequent changes in travel documents necessary for movement in European countries.

b. Changes in the Italian border control and police supervision of DP's in Italy.

c. Land and sea transportation facilities or lack thereof.

d. Opening and closing of immigration quotas by the various countries of South America.

e. The physical condition of visitors and dependents. It may be stated here that it is desirable that all persons be examined for TB, syphilis or other contagious diseases and that the female dependents be cautioned during the evacuation period relative to pregnancy, inasmuch as pregnant women or small children are acceptable only with grave difficulty and

at great expense.

f. Marriage Status. In view of the fact that Dragonovich is a Roman Catholic priest and the National Catholic Welfare is involved, the marriage status of male and female must be clearly established, inasmuch as the personalities associated in this operation will not condone any acts contrary to the Church such as common law marriage, illegitimate children not baptized, etc.

g. Although it might be advantageous to have absolute "control" of Father Dragonovich and his means of evacuation, it may be categorically stated that it is not possible and in the opinion of the undersigned not entirely desirable. Dragonovich is known and recorded as a Fascist, war criminal, etc., and his contacts with South American diplomats of a similar class are not generally approved by US State Department officials, plus the fact that in the light of security, it is better that we may be able to state, if forced, that the turning over of a DP to a Welfare Organization falls in line with our democratic way of thinking and that we are not engaged in illegal disposition of war criminals, defectees and the like.

4. COMPROMISES.

a. As stated above, the US citizen, Chief of the Eligibility Office, Rome was one [censored] who was allegedly a member of OSS during World War II, and who fancied himself as a top intelligence operative in Italy. After his breakdown due to alcoholism, [censored] imagined himself as the saviour of Italy in view of the danger of a Communist victory during the elections of 1948, thus told stories of how the undersigned could assist in providing large numbers of underground troops, military supplies, sea evacuation, air evacuation and the like. This, of course, caused inquiries as to the exact nature of the work in which the undersigned was engaged. This was explained away successfully in a personal interview with Admiral Mentz, Chief of IRO, Italy, and a full report was submitted to G-2, USFA.

b. The Brazil Expedition was, again, a compromise which was not the fault of operational technique. A female visitor who was inclined to be rather frivolous in her attentions became a public nuisance while under protective custody in Austria and was, therefore, evacuated as a married woman in custody of her amour of the moment. During the voyage, the lady in question changed her mind and upon arrival in Brazil sought assistance and protection from both the Brazilian authorities and the US Embassy. They, of course, were uninformed, inasmuch as it is impossible, due to lack of knowledge of transportation dates, visa quotes, etc., to give prior information as to when the shipments are to be made. The affair was made a matter of official investigation and necessarily other innocent people were involved and returned

to Europe.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS.

a. It has been the experience of this organization that only one man should be assigned the mission of disposition when dealing with Father Dragonovich. Inasmuch as he, although reliable from a security standpoint, is unscrupulous in his dealings concerning money, as he does a considerable amount of charity work for which he receives no compensation, it is not entirely impossible that he will delay one shipment for one organization to benefit another organization who pays higher prices.

b. Due to the background of Father Dragonovich and the nature of his work, it is not believed practical that the MA's in foreign countries under diplomatic status should become involved with the DP's who land through his channels of this operation.

c. Each visitor should be thoroughly and properly briefed and preparations for his movement be made in light of his cover story. Each should be furnished sufficient clothing, some travel money, and advance notice be sent through Dragonovich channels to assist in his rehabilitation in the country where he lands.

d. The facilities of Father Dragonovich should be handled as a single operation by one agency and no attempt should be made to control him or his sources for reasons set forth in this memorandum.

FOR THE COMMANDING OFFICER:

[signed]
PAUL E. LYON
IB Operations Officer

Tel: Salzburg 1146

[Handwritten: Copy No. 2 burned 14/4/50 - RW.]